File ACT/047/017

IN REPLY REFER TO:
U-25918
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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
OIL SHALE PROJECT OFFICE
P.O. Box 580
Grand Junction, CO 81501

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JUN 25 1984
DIVISION OF OIL
GAS & MINING

June 14, 1984

Memorandum

To: Oil Shale Project Manager

From: John Miley, Mining Engineer

Subject: Tract U-a/U-b, Inspection - Mining

Personnel Present:

Bob Hobbs	WROSC
Steve Navin	Parsons
John Miley	OSPO

Activities:

A fire occurred in the mine at the collar of the long-hole raise the morning of June 9, 1984.

A long hole raise approximately 35 feet through had been drilled from the mine level at the shaft to connect the decline. The blast holes were not drilled completely through to the roof of the decline. The first round of the raise was drilled and blasted from the decline. The second round was loaded from the mine level. The perimeter holes of the 10 X 10 foot raise were loaded all the way through the raise with trimtex (Hercules) for pre-splitting. The rest of the round was loaded 8 feet deep with the Tamptite (Hercules) explosives. Non-electric primers were used to prime the tamptite loaded holes. Prima-cord was used down the hole to prime the trimtex loaded holes.

Two 5-inch diameter cut holes were drilled through the raise which were not loaded. Ventilation air was up-cast through the boreholes. After drilling a blast hole, as much as 10% methane was detected at the collar of the hole.

At the blast the oil shale strata at the collars of the holes were heaved and broken into a pile about 2 feet thick, and this is the pile that was ignited and continued burning.

It is surmised that the heat of the blast, and especially from the trimtex explosives (lower grade explosive and smaller diameter cartridge untamped in the hole) ignited the upcasting methane which ignited oil

shale fines, which thus sustained the fire long enough to ignite the raw shale pile.

Attempt was made to blow a water mist toward the fire by injecting water to the compressed air line which was directed toward the fire. This may have surpressed the fire, but did not extinguish it.

Only 4 feet of rock pillar remained to make connection from the decline to the mine level development from the shaft. It was decided that this pillar section would be drilled and blasted through to make access from the decline to the fire location. Ventilation was downcast in the decline, and upcast in the shaft. Access was made to the fire area from the decline in fresh air, and the fire was readily extinguished and cooled with the hand held water hose.

xc: L. Ferguson BLM, Vernal
T. Portal UDOGM
B. Hobbs U-a/U-b
R. Madsen U-a/U-b
J. Goff U-a/U-b

John Miley